From Dr John Erskine
rec.d July 1790
by John Ryland

Mr. *Appleton's* SERMON

At the Ordination of

Mr. *JOSIAH COTTON.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

Iſaiah's Miſſion conſider'd and apply'd.

IN A

SERMON

Preached at the *Gathering* of a Church, and Ordination of their Paſtor,

The Reverend

Mr. JOSIAH COTTON,

In *PROVIDENCE*,

Octob. 23. 1728.

By *Nathaniel Appleton*, M. A.
Paſtor of the Church in *Cambridge*.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Iſaiah's Miſſion Conſider'd and apply'd.

Iſaiah VI. 8.

Alſo I heard the Voice of the Lord, ſaying, Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go for us? Then I ſaid, Here am I, ſend me.

GOD being about to imploy the holy Prophet as a Meſſenger to preach and propheſy unto his People, qualifies, and prepares, animates and encourages him to ſuch an important, but difficult Service, by making a glorious manifeſtation of himſelf to him in Viſion: of which we have an Account in the beginning of this Chapter. According to which Account, Heaven it ſelf ſeemed to be opened to the Prophet, by the glorious repreſentation that was made thereof in the Temple, which was the Symbol of Heaven. Here he beheld *the King, the Lord of Hoſts*, (which from *John* 12. 41. appears to be the Lord

Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt) *ſitting upon a Throne, high and liſted up,* encompaſſed with the Heavenly Hoſts of Seraphims; paying their Adorations to him, crying out one to another, ſaying, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory.* Upon which the very *Door-poſts of the Temple were moved, and the Houſe filled with Smoke,* which was the Glory of God, as appears from 2 *Chron.* 7. 1. But this was not *all* the Effect of this glorious appearance; for it ſtruck the Prophet into Terror and Amazement, and gave him ſuch a ſight of his ſinfulneſs, and the ſinfulneſs of the People among whom he dwelt, that it made him cry out, as in the 5*th.* verſe, *Wo is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a Man of unclean Lips, and I dwell in the midſt of a People of unclean Lips, for mine Eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of Hoſts.* It was the ſight of God, a lively apprehenſion of his Glory, and eſpecially of his holineſs, as it was proclaimed by the Angels, that filled him with ſuch an abaſing ſenſe of his own, and the People's Sinfulneſs and Vileneſs. —— And it is moſt certain that a ſpiritual ſight of God will fill any Man with ſuch an humble ſenſe of himſelf. It had this Effect on *Job,* (Chap. 42. 5, 6) *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eye ſeeth thee: wherefore I abhor my ſelf, and repent in Duſt and Aſhes.* And ſurely ſuch a ſight of God as will thus humble and abaſe us, is an excellent preparative for our going into God's Service, and to deliver his Meſſages to his People; for none but ſuch as are ſelf-humbled, and ſelf-abaſed, are fit for ſuch an high and holy Calling.

And

And now the Prophet being brought to ſuch a ſenſe of his unclean, and ſo his undone eſtate, God takes care, before he ſends him forth into his ſervice, to have him purified and cleanſed, and gives him the comfortable Evidences of it; for behold a Seraph flies *with a live Coal in his Hand, which he had taken from off the Altar*, either of Incenſe or that of burnt Offerings, for both had Fire burning continually upon them (as Mr. *Henry* obſerves) and laying the ſame on the Prophet's Mouth, tells him, *His Iniquity is taken away, and his Sin purged.* —— From whence we may learn, that ſuch as are to be Meſſengers of the Lord of Hoſts, that are to be God's Mouth unto the People, and the People's Mouth unto God, ſhould have both their Hearts and Lips, cleanſed from their Sin, they muſt be touched with a Coal from the Altar, that is, they muſt have the Merits of Chriſt's Sacrifice, and the purifying Influences of his Spirit applied to them, before they are fit to bear his Name among the People.

And thus I have briefly taken Notice of this glorious Viſion, till I am come to that part of it, which I intend by the help of God more particularly to inſiſt upon. The Prophet being touched with a Coal from the Altar, and hearing thoſe comfortable words from the miniſtring Spirit that was ſent unto him; he immediately heard another Voice, even the Voice of the Lord, who ſat upon a Throne high and lifted up, ſaying, *Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go for us?* It ſeems God had very important Meſſages to ſend to his People, and there muſt be ſome proper Perſon appointed

to

to deliver them; upon which there is a divine Council held, where the Three that bear record in Heaven, are deliberating and conſulting. For as it is well obſerved by Expoſitors, here is a fair intimation of the Trinity, or at leaſt of a plurality of Perſons in the God-head, and yet the unity of the Godhead. —— Whom ſhall *I* ſend? in the ſingular, and who will go for *us*? in the plural Number, as in *Gen.* 1. 26. Let *us* make Man, *&c.*

Whom ſhall I ſend? None are to go on God's Errands, or undertake to deliver his Meſſages, but thoſe whom *he* ſends; None may undertake the ſacred Office of the Miniſtry, but ſuch as have a Miſſion and Commiſſion from Chriſt. *How ſhall they preach, except they be ſent?* as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* 10. 15.

And who will go for us? Thoſe whom God ſends go for *him*; go forth not only in his Name, but upon his Account, to promote his Cauſe, Intereſt and Glory. God's faithful Meſſengers, ſuch as he ſends and approves of, don't go forth into his Service from ſelfiſh Views and ſiniſter Ends; but for the cauſe of God, they ſeek not their own Glory, but the Glory of him that ſent them, in imitation of their Maſter that went before them. *Joh.* 8. 50. And now God is deliberating with himſelf who this Perſon ſhall be. The Interogatory manner of ſpeech ſeems to intimate as if God was at a ſtand about the matter: but this may not be ſuppoſed of him whoſe Underſtanding is infinite; but it ſerves to intimate the difficulty, greatneſs, and importance of the Service, and how much God was concerned to have a proper and ſuitable Perſon to undertake it, one that was fit for

for the Service, and diſpoſed to engage in it.

Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go for us? Where is there a fit and proper Perſon for me to ſend upon ſuch important Service, who is qualified and accompliſhed to deliver my Meſſages unto the People, and who is diſpoſed to go for us? who is ſpirited and inclined to undertake ſuch a difficult Service?

And thus much for the Inquiry God is making in our Text, and the Import of it.

In the next place we may obſerve the Prophet's *Reply* thereto, *Then I ſaid, Here am I, ſend me.* The Prophet no ſooner hears God inquiring for one that would go into his Service, and deliver his Meſſages to his People, but he offers himſelf to it; he preſents himſelf unto him, as one ready to engage in his Service, and deſires he would accept of him, *Here am I, ſend me.*

But why was the Prophet ſo ready to undertake this Service, which he could not but know would be attended with a great many difficulties? He muſt needs know that it was a difficult and dangerous Office to be the Meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts to a ſinful People: If he be faithful in delivering his Meſſages unto them, he knew from the experience he had had already, that altho' a number might hearken unto him, yet that multitudes would deſpiſe and reject his Meſſages unto them; that they would ſlight and deſpiſe him, that they would reproach and ſlander him, that they would contradict and gainſay his Doctrines and Exhortations; and that he muſt deny himſelf many of the Comforts of Life, and go thro' many hard-

ſhips and difficulties; I ſay, conſidering the Prophet muſt needs know ſomething of the difficulties that would attend this Service, why did he ſo *readily* offer himſelf to undertake it? Now the reaſon is very plain and obvious: God had favoured the Prophet with a glorious Viſion, *His Eyes had ſeen the King, the Lord of Hoſts*; which humbled the Prophet, and ſo far prepared, and diſpoſed him to engage in any Service that God ſhould call him to, without objecting any thing againſt the difficulties and hardſhips he ſhould meet with therein, being convinced by that glorious and ſelf-humbling ſight, that he ought to engage in any Service God ſhould call him to, and that it was Honour ſufficient to be employed by this glorious King, however difficult and troubleſome the Service might be.

But beſides this he had *his Lips touched with a live-Coal from off the Altar*, which was not only a ſign of his Iniquities being taken away; but alſo of the ſpecial and bleſſed Influences of the holy Spirit upon his Soul. When that live-Coal touched his Lips, the Holy Ghoſt touched his Heart, and he was baptized with it as with Fire: for it ſet him all in a flame of love to God, and zeal for his Glory, that overcame all the difficulties and diſcouragements in the Service of God, ſo that he could no ſooner hear the Queſtion, *Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go for us?* but he anſwers with all imaginable chearfulneſs, *here am I, ſend me.*

The Words ſo largely opened afford many uſeful Obſervations; I ſhall mention only three, which I ſhall ſpeak very briefly to.

1. *God*

1. *God is greatly concerned to have proper and ſuitable Perſons imployed in his Service, to deliver his Meſſages unto his People.*

2. *When God has any Meſſages to deliver, his Goſpel to ſend unto a People, ſuch as are prepared for that Service ſhould readily offer themſelves unto it, notwithſtanding any difficulties and diſcouragements in the way.*

3. *Our being prepared, and diſpoſed for ſuch difficult Service depends upon our being touched with the powerful Influences of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Doct. 1. *God is greatly concerned to have proper and ſuitable Perſons imployed in his Service to deliver his Meſſages unto his People.*

Here let me ſay, as the Doctrine implies,

1. *God has ſome Errands, and Meſſages to ſend to the Children of Men.*

That is, God has ſome things concerning Himſelf, concerning his Being and Perfections, concerning his Works and his Will, to reveal unto us, which we can't come to the knowledge of, but by divine Revelation; and yet of infinite Importance to be known by us: and therefore God in tender Condeſcention is pleaſed to ſend ſuch Meſſages to us, to inform us of what is neceſſary to be known by us. Theſe therefore are in general the Meſſages that God has ſent and is ſending to the Children of Men, namely,

that he is the true God, that he is the living God and an everlaſting King, that he is the Almighty God, and that his Underſtanding is infinite, that he is the God of Truth and without Iniquity, and juſt and right is he: that he is good and does good, and that the whole Earth is full of his goodneſs: that he made all things, and for his pleaſure they are and were created. That he made us and not we our ſelves, and that he made Man upright, but we ſoon ſought out many Inventions: but although we deſtroyed our ſelves, yet in him was our Help found, and that he has laid help upon one that was mighty to ſave; that he ſo loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son for us, that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh but have everlaſting Life. That Chriſt was deliver'd for our Offences, and roſe again for our Juſtification, and ever lives to make Interceſſion for us at the right hand of God, and that he will make a ſecond and glorious appearance in the World, at which time, the Dead both ſmall and great ſhall ariſe, and appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, to receive a Reward according to all things done in the Body: And that the Wicked ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment, but the Righteous into Life eternal.

Now theſe and ſuch like Meſſages God has been and is ſending to his People, and which we have received from his Word and by the Miniſters of it, who are called the Meſſengers of the Lord of Hoſts, becauſe their Buſineſs is to deliver theſe Meſſages unto the People, to preach the Goſpel, and declare the whole Counſel

ſel of God unto them.

2. It may likewiſe be ſaid, *that God imploys ſome from among our ſelves to deliver his Meſſages, to diſpenſe his Word, and Ordinances unto his People.*

God don't deliver his Mind to us by his own Mouth *immediately* from Heaven: nor does he ſend it to us by the Miniſtry of *Angels*, as he did the Law at Mount *Sinai*; but he commits this Affair unto Men among our ſelves, our Brethren, partakers of the ſame Fleſh and Blood, and ſubject to like Paſſions, Infirmities, and Imperfections as other Men. And now God orders it ſo,

1. *In merciful Condeſcention to us, that his Terror might not make us afraid.*

Such is the infinite Greatneſs of the divine Being, and with Him is ſuch terrible Majeſty, that we could not hear his Voice immediately without the utmoſt terror and amazement. *The Voice of the Lord*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, 29 Pſal. 4, 5. *is powerful, the Voice of the Lord is full of Majeſty.* And ſo terrible was his Voice when he delivered the Law at Mount *Sinai*, that all the People intreated *Moſes*, ſaying, *Speak thou unto us and we will hear; but let not God ſpeak with us leſt we die.* Exod. 20. 19.

2. *God does it to put Honour upon Men.*

It is an unſpeakable Honour to be a Meſſenger of the King of Heaven, to be employed in bringing his Meſſages unto his People, and in returning the Prayers and Praiſes of his People to him. The Angels look upon it as their honour and happineſs to be his Miniſters, and to do his pleaſure, and to be ſent forth *to miniſter unto*

unto them that ſhall be Heirs of Salvation. Heb. 1. 14. And ſurely it muſt needs be a peculiar honour unto Men, that any of them are imployed in this ſacred Function. And God has no doubt a deſign herein to confer honour and reſpect on Man; for he has always been diſpoſed to do it: he at firſt *crowned Man with Glory and Honour*, and ſince the Fall he has through the infinite Riches of his Grace put the greateſt honour upon our Nature; for Chriſt the Eternal Son of God, who refuſed to take on him *the Nature of Angels*, became the *Seed of Abraham*. And now he is paſſed into the Heavens, he appears at the right hand of the Father in our Nature, where all the Angels in Heaven worſhip him. And although they are all miniſtring Spirits to the Saints, yet he puts this honour upon ſome of the Children of Men as to make them his Meſſengers and Embaſſadors, Commiſſioning *them* to preach the Goſpel, and to manage all the Affairs of his viſible Kingdom among Men. Altho' an Angel is ſent to *Cornelius*, yet it is only to direct him to ſend for *Peter*, a Man like himſelf, who had the honour of Preaching the Goſpel to him, and ſhewing him the way to Salvation. *Act.* 10. But,

3. *God does it to make his Power known.*

The more weak the Inſtruments are that God makes uſe of, to bring about the Converſion and Salvation of Sinners, the more plain and conſpicuous is the Power of God in it. And the Glory of the work will be more readily granted to him, and this is the Account the Apoſtle gives of the matter, 2 Cor. 4. 7. *We have this Trea-*

Treaſure in Earthen Veſſels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us. The Inſtruments being ſo weak makes it the more evident, that it is not by the Power of the Inſtruments that any are Converted, but by the Power of God. By this it will for ever appear that although *Paul plants and Apollo waters, yet it is God that gives the Increaſe.*

3. *God is greatly concerned to have proper and ſuitable Perſons imployed in his Service, to deliver his Meſſages unto his People.*

Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go for us? are words that import a great concern of Mind about the matter.

For the clearing this Propoſition, there are three things that naturally fall under conſideration.

1. *Who* are proper Perſons to be imployed in God's Service, to be his Meſſengers unto his People, or what are the *Qualifications* for ſuch a Service?

2 *How* or *wherein it appears* that God is greatly concerned to have ſuitable Perſons imployed in his Service?

3. *Why* he is ſo much concerned about it?

But I muſt only juſt hint at theſe things.

Queſt. 1. *Who are proper and ſuitable Perſons to be God's Meſſengers unto his People? What is it that will qualify Perſons for this ſacred Office?*

Now without giving a particular Account of thoſe things that would qualify and accompliſh Men for the Miniſterial Office, I ſhall only ſay in general, *That a good meaſure of ſpiritual Gifts, and Graces are the things that qualify Men to be God's Meſſengers to his People.* Spi-

Spiritual Gifts, they enable Men to deliver the Meſſages of God to his People, and Graces ſerve to diſpoſe and incline Men to undertake the Service, and to be faithful in it. Perſons of but low Attainments in Gifts and Graces are not fit for ſo high and holy a Calling. The ſuitable Perſons for this ſacred Office are ſuch as having good natural Powers and Capacities, have the ſame improved, and enlarged by acquired *knowledge*: they are ſuch as have attained to a good degree of Knowledge and Learning, eſpecially in things ſpiritual: they are ſuch as are well acquainted with the Scriptures, the great Doctrines, and Duties contained therein: and that have the Gift of opening, confirming and applying the ſame to others. Moreover, they muſt be Men of great *Wiſdom*, and ſingular Prudence to manage ſuch a weighty and difficult Affair.

But beſides theſe things it is highly requiſite that they have an *experimental* Knowledge of God and Chriſt, whom they are to preach to others; and that they have their Souls inflamed with Love to them, and that they be filled with a tender compaſſionate Regard to the Souls of thoſe to whom they are ſent; which may put them upon being true to the Intereſt of Chriſt their Maſter, and faithful to thoſe under their Charge.

In ſhort, for I may not enlarge, Men of Knowledge and Wiſdom, Men of Faith and Prayer, Men of Humility and Charity, Men of Patience and Self-denial, Men of Zeal and true Chriſtian Courage, accompanied with an exemplary Life and Converſation, are ſuitable Perſons

to be Meſſengers and Embaſſadors of Chriſt, and to miniſter in holy things.

Queſt. 2. *How and wherein does it appear that God is concerned to have proper and ſuitable Perſons imployed in his Service?*

Anſ. 1. *From the particular Directions he has given as to the Qualifications and Accompliſhments of ſuch as engage in this Service.*

Thus we have a general Direction that they ſhould be *clean that bear the Veſſels of the Lord.* Iſa. 52. 11. And what a particular Deſcription have we of the Qualifications neceſſary for Goſpel-Biſhops or Miniſters by the Apoſtle *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 2——11. *A Biſhop then muſt be blameleſs, the Husband of one Wife, vigilant, ſober, of good Behaviour, given to Hoſpitality, apt to teach, not given to Wine, no ſtriker: not greedy of filthy Lucre, but patient, not a brauler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own Houſe, having his Children in ſubjection with all gravity. For if a Man know not how to rule his own Houſe, how ſhall he take care of the Church of God? Not a Novice, leſt being lifted up with Pride he fall into the Condemnation of the Devil. Moreover, he muſt have a good report of them which are without, leſt he fall into Reproach, and the ſnare of the Devil.* And ſo in his Epiſtle to *Titus*, where telling him that he left him in *Crete* to ordain Elders in every City, he proceeds to ſay what *kind* of Men they muſt be, as in *Titus* 1. 5, *&c.* And now theſe Qualifications of Goſpel-Miniſters being left on Scripture-Record for the Direction of the Church in all Ages, ſhews the Concern God has, that there may be always proper and ſuitable Perſons imployed in his Service.

Anſ. 2. *It may be argued from the Caution given about receiving any into this ſacred Office.*

Thus in 1. *Tim.* 5. 22. *Timothy* is ſtrictly caution'd againſt *laying Hands ſuddenly* on any Man: that is, he muſt not raſhly bring any into the Miniſterial Office; but muſt wait till he had ſufficient Proof of their being qualified and accompliſhed for that Service, before he ſhould preſume to lay hands on them in ſolemn Ordination: the way of ſeparating to that ſacred Office, being by the *laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.* 1 Tim. 4. 14.

Anſ. 3. Again, *It may be argued from the Proviſion God has for the moſt part made, and bleſſed for the educating and training up of Perſons for that ſacred Office.*

Wherever the Church of God has been fixed and ſettled, God has expreſſed his Concern for having ſuitable Perſons imployed in his Service, by affording for the moſt part ſpecial means to accompliſh them therefor, that is, by putting it into the Hearts of ſuch a People to erect *Schools* and *Colleges* for Learning, wherein Perſons have been inſtructed and duly qualified for, and then called forth into this ſacred Service.

Here I might ſay, that *Moſes*, who from his Birth was deſigned to be an eminent Prophet of the Lord, was by the Providence of God favoured with a liberal Education, and *was learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians*, which was as conſiderable as any at that time in the World, and ſo by the concurring Influences of the holy Spirit, ſanctifying the ſame, he became *mighty in words and in deeds*, as the Apoſtle tells us, *Act.* 7. 22.

And

And when God had ſettled his viſible Church the *Iſraelitiſh* Nation in the promiſed Land, he ſhewed his Concern for their having well-qualified Prophets, and Preachers among them, by the Schools and Colleges that were erected, and ſupported for the educating and training up ſome of their Youth for that divine Imployment. Thus we often read of the *Sons of the Prophets*, (1 King. 20. 35. 2 *King.* 2. 3.) which were young Men trained up under the Inſtruction of ſome elder Prophets; and theſe were doubtleſs Educated in Schools, and then in Colleges, from whence they went forth to Preach and Propheſy among the People. And there are fair Intimations of ſeveral ſuch Seminaries of Learning or Schools of the Prophets, one at *Bethel*, and another at *Jericho*, 2 *King.* 2. 3, 5. And another at *Gilgal*, (2 *King.* 4. 38.) of which *Eliſha* was Preſident, which was ſuch a growing College in his Time, that they were obliged to enlarge their Buildings for the reception of the Scholars. (2 *King.* 6. *begin.*) And here I might obſerve, that this very Prophet *Iſaiah*, (if we may believe Jewiſh Traditions) being of the "Blood Royal," had doubtleſs peculiar Advantages for his Education, and his natural Parts, with his great Acquirements in Learning, being ſanctified, rendered him (as Mr. *Pool* obſerves) "the Prince of all the Pro-"phets, and that there are more Quotations in "the New-Teſtament taken out of *Iſaiah*, than "out of all the other Prophets".

And ſince *Chriſtianity* has been ſet up in the World, God has after the ſame manner been ſhewing his concern, that there might be

ſuitable Perſons imployed in preaching the everlaſting Goſpel to the People. For altho' our bleſſed Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, for wiſe and good Ends, was pleaſed to make Choice of illiterate Fiſhermen for the firſt preachers and propagators of Chriſtianity, preparing them for that Service, by pouring down the miraculous Gifts of the Spirit upon them; yet even theſe were for ſome Years training up for that Service, under the Diſcipline and Inſtruction of the beſt of Tutors, even Chriſt himſelf. And afterwards when the Church came to be ſettled, Men of Learning were improved in that Service, and Means of Education were provided, and God has all along ſmiled upon ſuch Seminaries of Learning and Piety, by imploying for the moſt part, thoſe that have had their Education in them, in his Service. They have been Fountains, when they have been kept clear and uncorrupt, whoſe Streams have made glad the Churches of our God.—— Nay, and if we will but look back to the Apoſtles times, we ſhall find that the moſt eminent of them all was prepared for his peculiar uſefulneſs to the Church by his liberal Education; I mean the Apoſtle *Paul*, who although he was one as it were *born out of due time*, yet *came not behind the very chiefeſt Apoſtles, and laboured more abundantly than they all*; and there are more of his writings left for the uſe, and benefit of the Church, than of any of the Apoſtles. And now God had an Eye to *this*, doubtleſs, when he ordered it ſo in his providence, that he ſhould be brought up in the Learning of that Day.

For

For (as one * obſerves concerning him) "his "Education was in the School of *Tarſus* at firſt, "which was a little *Athens* for Learning; there "he acquainted himſelf with the Philoſophy "and Poetry of the *Greeks*: thence he was ſent "to the Univerſity at *Jeruſalem*, to ſtudy Divini-"ty, and the *Jewiſh* Law; whoſe Tutor was "*Gamaliel*.

I have inſiſted the larger upon this Head, to remove the unreaſonable prejudices any may have taken againſt Learning or learned Men, to ſee that God himſelf generally makes uſe of ſuch to build up his Church and Kingdom in the World, as being the moſt ſuitable Perſons for ſuch Service.

Anſ. 4. *God's concern to have ſuitable Perſons imployed in his Service, appears from the great Solemnities that have been and are made uſe of, in ſetting Perſons apart for, and bringing them into this ſacred Office.*

Thus, in what a ſolemn manner was *Aaron* and his Sons introduced into the prieſtly Office, and the Tribe of *Levi* into the Service of the Sanctuary! And what a number of Ceremonies were made uſe of for the purification and cleanſing of them! And then what Solemnity was uſed with the Apoſtles, before they were ſent forth, after our Saviour's Aſcenſion! Thus they are charged to tarry at *Jeruſalem*, till they be *indued with Power from on high*. And this induing with Power from on high, was in a very ſolemn manner; for the Holy Ghoſt deſcended in a

* Mr. *Henry*.

viſible

viſible manner upon them in *Cloven Tongues as of Fire, when they were praying together with one accord.* And altho' there is not at preſent any miraculous Solemnity, at the ſending forth the ordinary Miniſters of the Goſpel, yet even now they are to be ſet apart with ſuch ſolemn Faſting and Prayer, and impoſition of the Hands of the Presbytery, and with ſuch a ſolemn and awful Charge from the Lord Jeſus, by the mouth of one of his Embaſſadors, as makes it very evident, that it is an Affair about which God is greatly concerned.

Anſ. 5. Laſtly, *God's Concern about this matter may be argued from the promiſe of his continual preſence with them.*

When Chriſt gave his Commiſſion to his Diſciples to *go and teach all Nations*, &c. he concludes with this Promiſe, *Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the World.* Matth. 28 20. Which muſt be underſtood of them and their Succeſſors in all Ages of the Church. And now his promiſing to be with them, ſhows his Concern for them. For this Promiſe of Chriſt's preſence, contains the Promiſe of his Spirit in all his miniſterial Gifts and Graces, Qualifying and accompliſhing them for, as well as encouraging and ſucceeding them in their work.

Queſt. 3. *Why is God concerned about the Perſons to be imployed in his Service, and to be his Meſſengers unto his People?*

Here I ſhall only ſay in general,

There being ſo few qualified for this truſt, and yet the honour of Chriſt, and the welfare of precious Souls,

are

are ſufficient and very weighty Reaſons for God to be greatly concerned in this matter.

The miniſterial work is ſo great and difficult, that every Man is not fit for it, nor capable of managing it. Few Men are equal to the Dignity, Difficulty and Importance of this ſacred Office. Multitudes there are that have neither Knowledge nor Prudence, nor Grace enough to go through ſuch an undertaking.

But yet the Honour of Chriſt is greatly concerned in having ſuitable Perſons imployed in this Service. As it is for the Honour of a King to ſend ſuitable Embaſſadors, Men of Policy and Fidelity, to appear for him in foreign Courts, and to imploy well qualified and faithful Officers to manage the Affairs of his own Kingdom; ſo the honour of Chriſt, *that bleſſed and only Potentate* requires that Men duly qualified be imployed as his Meſſengers and Embaſſadors to the Children of Men.— And it is certain that nothing tends more to the diſhonour of Chriſt, than unskilful and unfaithful Officers in managing the Affairs of his viſible Kingdom: That is, in plain terms, nothing brings greater diſhonour to the Name of Chriſt, and that holy Religion he has ſet up, than ignorant, looſe and ſcandalous Miniſters; and therefore God may well be concerned about this matter.

And then again, *If we conſider the Deſign of the Goſpel-Miniſtry, and how much the Salvation of Men's Souls depends upon the having skilful and faithful Guides, we ſhall ſee the Reaſon, why God is ſo concerned about it.*

When

When God ſends his Goſpel to a People, it is that they might come to the Knowledge and Obedience of the Truth, and be ſaved: but if Perſons unqualified for that Service be ſent to preach the Goſpel, it will have the moſt natural tendency to fruſtrate the gracious deſigns of God to ſuch a People. Perſons unaccompliſhed as to Gifts and Graces, for the miniſterial Office, inſtead of advancing Religion, and promoting the Salvation of Men, they put a ſtop to it, and harden Men in their Iniquities, and lead them into *Atheiſm*, and Infidelity. And this is evident, not only from the natural tendency of the thing, but from too ſad and frequent experience of it, in many parts of the Chriſtian World. It is moſt certain that an Ignorant, looſe, and debauched Clergy are ſome of the moſt powerful Engines the Devil has to ruin the Cauſe of Chriſt, and deſtroy the Souls of Men. Which are ſufficient Reaſons why God ſhould be concerned in this matter: ſo concerned as to take all proper care, that ſuitable Perſons be put into Service, and offended, and diſpleaſed when others intrude and thruſt themſelves into it.

Doct. 2. *When God has a Meſſage to deliver, his Goſpel to ſend unto a People, altho' the Service be attended with difficulties and diſcouragements, yet ſuch as God has prepared for it, ſhould readily offer themſelves unto it.*

The Prophet being prepared, and qualified for the Service, did no ſooner hear God ſay, *Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go for us?* but he anſwers, *Here am I, ſend me.* And this Example is written for our Inſtruction.

Here

Here let me ſay,

1. God may ſometimes have Meſſages to deliver, the Goſpel to ſend to ſuch places as are attended with great difficulties and diſcouragements.

2. Such as are qualified and prepared for that Service, ſhould readily offer themſelves unto it notwithſtanding.

1. *God has ſometimes Meſſages, Goſpel-Meſſages to deliver, that are attended with great difficulties and diſcouragements.*

The Work of the Miniſtry in general, which is to deliver the Meſſages of God in his Word unto his People, is a very difficult Service, and it is in Scripture compared to the moſt difficult Labours and Services that Men ever engage in. And it always requires a great deal of Skill, Prudence, Patience, Courage, Conſtancy and Reſolution, faithfully to diſcharge the Duties of that Office. But then, there are ſome parts of this Office, ſome Places and Perſons where, and to whom theſe Goſpel Meſſages are to be delivered, that are attended with peculiar Difficulties and Diſcouragements.

1. *The Nature of the Meſſages may be ſuch as to render it a difficult and in it ſelf an undeſirable Service.*

Thus, as the Scripture is profitable for Reproof, and Correction, as well as for Doctrine and Inſtruction; ſo theſe Admonitions and Reproofs muſt be adminiſtred to whom they belong. Miniſters are ſolemnly charged to *reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-ſuffering and Doctrine.* 2 Tim. 4. 2. They muſt cry aloud, and ſpare not;

they muſt lift up their Voice like a Trumpet, ſhewing to the Houſe of *Jacob* their Tranſgreſſion, and to *Iſrael* their Sin. People muſt be plainly told of their Faults, and ſharply rebuked for them; and this not only in a general way, but there muſt be a perſonal Addreſs made to them, telling them as *Nathan* did King *David*, *Thou art the Man.* But now this is a Duty attended with Difficulty: It was no doubt a hard Task to *Nathan*, and nothing leſs than the powerful Impreſſion of a divine Command would have perſwaded him to bring ſuch a Meſſage to the King.

2. *The Deſign or apprehended Effect of the Meſſage may be ſuch, as to render the Service very difficult and diſcouraging.*

God may have Meſſages of Judgment inſtead of Mercy to ſend to a People. When a People have been incorrigible under former Reproofs and Counſels, God may then ſend a Meſſenger in Judgment to them, to ripen them for the Judgments he intends to bring upon them: and ſo the deſign of the Meſſage is to be a ſavor of Death unto Death, and not of Life unto Life: it may be to make hard hearts harder, and blind Eyes blinder.

And now it was ſuch a Meſſage God had to ſend to his People by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, as appears from the following Words to my Text, *Go and tell my People, Hear ye indeed but underſtand not, ſee ye indeed but perceive not; make the Heart of this People fat, and mak their Ears heavy, and ſhut their Eyes, leſt they ſee with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and underſtand with their Heart, and convert,*

vert, and be healed. And this muſt needs be a melancholy Errand indeed, and might well fill a Man with ſecret Horror and Dread at the thought of being the Inſtrument of ſuch an awful Judgment.

3. Again, *a great deal of difficulty may ariſe from the Places and Perſons to whom theſe Meſſages may be ſent.*

God ſometimes needs Meſſengers to go into foreign Countries, and to a ſtrange Land, to a People *of a ſtrange Speech, and of a hard Language, whoſe Words we cannot underſtand.* He may have occaſion to ſend to barbarous and uncultivated Nations, where we muſt take leave of the Delights and Comforts of Life, which muſt needs render the Service difficult, and the Undertaking dangerous, to ſuch as conſult their preſent Eaſe and Pleaſure. Furthermore, and that which is worſe than all this, God ſometimes ſends to a hardened, wicked and obſtinate People, that diſregard all the Meſſages of God, and abuſe his Meſſengers that are ſent unto them. God may ſend Meſſengers to ſuch a People, as he ſent the Prophet *Ezekiel* to, of whom God himſelf declares, that they *were a rebellious Nation, they and their Fathers, impudent Children, and ſtiff-hearted*; and his living among them is repreſented, *as living with Briers and Thorns, and among Scorpions,* Ezek. 2. *begin.* God may have occaſion to ſend Meſſengers to ſuch as deſpiſe the Goſpel, the Ordinances and the Miniſters of it, that will ſcoff at them, and revile and abuſe them, that will gainſay and oppoſe them, which muſt needs render the Service very difficult, dangerous and diſcouraging.

2. *Notwithſtanding the difficulties and diſcouragements that may attend the delivering of any of God's Meſſages, yet ſuch as are furniſhed and prepared for ſuch Service ſhould not be backward, but be very ready and willing to engage in it.*

I ſay, ſuch as are furniſhed and prepared for ſuch Service; for it is not expected or required that others ſhould offer themſelves to it. As for ſuch as have not had a liberal Education, nor any other advantages for gaining the miniſterial Gifts of the Spirit, for them to offer to undertake ſuch difficult Service, would ſhew their Pride, Ignorance and Preſumption, rather than an hearty Zeal for the Glory of God. And the beſt interpretation that can be made of ſuch over-forwardneſs is their *having a Zeal but not according to knowledge.*

But now, as for ſuch as God has accompliſhed for this Service; whenever there is a Service of ſuch a nature pointed out by Providence, and the Voice of Providence (for no immediate Voice is to be expected) ſeems to be, *Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go for us?* ſuch ought to anſwer as readily as the Prophet, *Here am I, ſend me.* We ſhould be ready to every good Work we are capable of and called unto, notwithſtanding the difficulties that may appear in the way. If we apprehend it is the Will of God that we ſhould go into ſuch a Service, we muſt not confer with Fleſh and Blood, but muſt ſurmount all the difficulties, and chearfully engage in it. And that we ought to do ſo will appear abundantly evident, if we conſider the abſolute Sovereignty of God, and the relation he ſtands in to us, of a Creator

Creator and Preſerver, of a Redeemer and Saviour, and if we conſider our abſolute dependance upon him, for Life and Breath, and all things that we enjoy in the preſent World, and for Pardon and Grace, and eternal Life in the World that is to come. I ſay, if we conſider theſe things, with all the Arguments they carry in them, we ſhall ſee ſuch Perſons to be under infinite Obligations to undertake the moſt difficult Service, that God ſhall call them unto.—— But the particular conſideration of thoſe things I muſt paſs over, that I might come to the third and laſt Doctrine. *viz.*

Doct. 3. *Our being prepared and diſpoſed to deliver thoſe Meſſages of God unto his People, which are attended with peculiar difficulties, depends upon our being touched with the Influences of the Holy Ghoſt.*

The Prophet is touched with a live-Coal from the Altar, which cleanſed him from the Guilt and Filth of his Sins, and ſo prepared and diſpoſed him, to ſay as in our Text, *Here am I, ſend me.* And, as has been obſerved, this live-Coal repreſents the Holy Ghoſt, which was very powerfully and ſenſibly conveyed to him in all the bleſſed Influences of it, at that time. The Prophet, no doubt, was a good Man before this, and really under the gracious Influences of the Holy Spirit: but yet not to ſuch a degree as to prepare him for, or diſpoſe him ſo readily to a Compliance with, ſuch a difficult Service. But at the ſame time the Coal touched his Lips, the Holy Ghoſt touched his Heart, and gave him new Light, new Zeal, and new Courage, that he could ſay, *Here am I, ſend me.*

And

And thus it is with all that are ſpirited to engage in difficult Service, to go into any uncultivated parts of the Vineyard, that are very hard and troubleſome to ſubdue. It is owing to their being touched with a Coal from the Altar, to the more powerful Influences of the Spirit, qualifying therefor, and animating and exciting thereto.

Under this Doctrine, I might for the Illuſtration of it obſerve, That Men naturally are unprepared for, and indiſpoſed to do any Service for God, and that even good Men are very dull and backward at going into ſuch Service as is attended with very peculiar difficulties; and ſo conſequently, that it needs the more powerful Influences of the bleſſed Spirit to prepare Mens minds and incline their Hearts to engage therein. And ſo I might ſhew, that all that Knowledge, all that Skill, Wiſdom and Prudence, all that Faith, that Humility, that Patience and Self-denial, and the like, which are ſo neceſſary to fit and accompliſh Perſons for the miniſterial Work, are from the Spirit of God, and are declared to be the fruit of the Spirit. And not only ſo, but all thoſe Diſpoſitions and Inclinations and Deſires, that are in any to undertake and engage in ſuch Services for God as are attended with peculiar difficulties and diſcouragements are from the ſelf-ſame Spirit. It is he that inſpires our Souls with a Love to God and flaming Zeal for his Glory, and with the moſt compaſſionate Love and Concern for the Souls of Men, that will put us upon engaging in difficulties, and enduring hardſhips for the advancing Religion,

gion, and promoting the Salvation of Men. For nothing leſs than the powerful Influences of the Spirit can accompliſh Men for, and diſpoſe them to engage in, or to be faithful in the Diſcharge of ſuch difficult Services.

The Apoſtles being ſo wonderfully accompliſhed for, and ſpirited unto the difficult Service of preaching the Goſpel to all Nations, when they met with ſuch oppoſitions, and run thro' ſuch dangers, and endured ſuch hardſhips, who was it from, but from the Holy Ghoſt, the Promiſe of the Father, which was in ſuch a wonderful manner poured out upon them? And the Apoſtle *Paul* accordingly aſcribes it all to God and to his Grace and Spirit, 1 Cor. 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the Grace of God that was with me.*

But I muſt have done, for it is more than time that I come to the

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Infer. *How thankful ſhould we be to God that he is concerned to have ſuitable Perſons imployed in his Service!*

It is an unſpeakable Mercy to have able, and faithful Miniſters, and we are to adore the goodneſs of God, eſpecially to the Churches of *New-England,* that he has taken ſuch particular Care of them, as to furniſh them from time to time, with Paſtors after his own Heart, to feed his People with Knowledge and Underſtanding. And we ſhould continue our Prayers to the Father of Lights, that he would ſtill continue his ſpecial Care

Care of his Churches, that they may always be enlightened with burning and ſhining Lights.

In. 2. *Since God is concerned to have ſuitable Perſons imployed in the Miniſtry, hence Miniſters and People ſhould be concerned and careful who they call and put into this ſacred Office.*

God's being concerned about the matter, ſhews that it is a matter of great Importance, and that every one ought to be careful and cautious, not ſudden or precipitate in ſuch a matter. The advancement of Religion depends very much upon their having wiſe and faithful Miniſters imployed in it. A People therefore ſhould be well ſatisfied of a Man's Qualifications for this ſacred Office, before they call him to it; and Miniſters muſt lay Hands ſuddenly on Man, but be well ſatisfied of their miniſterial Gifts and Graces, before they ſeparate them to that holy Function.

In. 3. *How ſhould ſuch as are deſigning for and entring into this Service, be concerned about themſelves, to ſee that they be ſuch as God approves of, and is willing to imploy in his Service!*

Surely ſuch ſhould be ſo concerned in this matter, as to examine themſelves very ſtrictly, to ſee if they find any miniſterial Qualifications in them; and ought not to preſume ſo far as to undertake ſuch an important but difficult Service, before they have good grounds to think that God by his Spirit has furniſhed and accompliſhed them in ſome meaſure for it. None are to go except they be ſent; and we may depend upon it, that God never ſends any into his Service, that he has not qualified and accompliſhed for it.

In. 4.

4. In. *Ought thoſe whom God has prepared for his Service, readily to offer themſelves to it when he calls them, how difficult and diſcouraging the Service may be? hence then it is matter of Lamentation, that there is ſuch a backwardneſs to ſuch Service.*

When we conſider the worth of precious and immortal Souls, and the infinite Price the Son of God has laid down for the Ranſome of them, even his own moſt precious Blood, and that this Sacrifice which Chriſt has once made of himſelf is of infinite Value, and ſufficient for the whole World: And when we conſider that God is willing to be reconciled to every repenting and believing Sinner, and accordingly invites all to come to him, declaring, that *whoſoever will, may come to the Waters of Life freely*; I ſay, when we conſider theſe things, it muſt needs appear a very lamentable thing, when there are not found thoſe that will carry this joyful News to the Children of Men, and bring them the Invitations of Grace and Mercy that are proclaimed in the Goſpel. Shall God ſo love the World, as to give his only begotten Son for it, and ſhall Chriſt not think his Life too dear to lay down for us! and ſhall we think it much to be at ſome Pains, and to part with ſome of the Comforts of the preſent Life, to carry the everlaſting Goſpel to them? What a lamentable thing is this! Oh what want of love to God, what want of Zeal for his Glory, and of Compaſſion for our Fellow-Creatures, diſcovers it ſelf in ſuch a backwardneſs!

5. In. *Since it is by Men's being touched with the powerful Influences of the holy Ghoſt, that they are*

prepared for and diſpoſed to ſuch difficult Service; hence then, how ought we to pray, that the Spirit might be poured out more plentifully upon the Candidates for the Miniſtry.

Nothing would ſerve more for the advancing the Intereſt of Chriſt, and for the enlarging the Borders of his Kingdom, than to have a Number raiſed up, qualified for, and ſpirited to go forth into Chriſt's Service, to carry the Goſpel-Meſſages to thoſe that have not as yet received them. And one way that we are to ſhow our concern for the Intereſt and Glory of Chriſt, is to pray, that his Spirit may be poured down upon the Candidates for the Miniſtry, preparing them for, and diſpoſing them to what Service Chriſt may have for them to do. The Spirit is given as the Anſwer of Prayer; and we may be encouraged in our Prayers of this kind, becauſe we may be aſſured that ſuch Prayers are agreeable to his Will. *And this is the Confidence we have, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us.*

6. In. *How thankful ſhould we be, and give the Glory of it to God, when any are ſo touched with the bleſſed Influences of the Holy Spirit, as to be prepared and diſpoſed to engage in the Service of the Goſpel-Miniſtry, even when it is attended with difficult and diſcouraging Circumſtances.*

This is the way by which God inlarges his Kingdom, and makes way for bringing in his Elect in all parts of the World, by raiſing up and ſpiriting one and another to carry the everlaſting Goſpel to them. And therefore, if we are heartily concerned for the advancement of the

Kingdom

Kingdom and Intereſt of Chriſt, and if we have any Concern for the Salvation of Men, we ſhall be thankful to God when any are ſpirited to go forth into his Service, acknowledging to his Glory that all accompliſhments for, and Inclinations to undertake ſuch a Service come from him, and are the effect of the powerful Operations of the Holy Ghoſt upon their Souls. We ſhould bleſs God for all the Prophets of old that God raiſed up, and ſent forth, and for the holy Apoſtles, and for all the faithful Miniſters of the Goſpel: for if they had not been touched with a Coal from the Altar, with the quickening, ſanctifying, and encouraging Influences of the Holy Spirit, we ſhould all have been under Heatheniſh darkneſs, periſhing for lack of viſion.

I ſhall now conclude with applying what has been ſaid, to the People of this place, and to the occaſion of this ſolemn meeting together.

God in his ſovereign Providence has ſettled you in a very fruitful part of the Land, and upon outward Accounts it may be ſaid, that the Lines are fallen to you in a pleaſant place, and he has given you a goodly heritage; but you have been unhappy on ſpiritual Accounts, that you have not had ſuch a plentiful Enjoyment of the Goſpel and the bleſſed Ordinances of it. And more unhappy, that you have not been ſo ſenſible of the want hereof, nor ſo concerned as you ought to have been for the enjoyment of ſuch unſpeakable Priviledges, or at leaſt, ſuch a Number as to ſupport the Goſpel among you. Your Caſe has been pitied by your Chriſtian Friends, and many Prayers have been going up to the God of all Grace for

you, and many Endeavours uſed that you might not be any longer as Sheep without a Shepherd.

And it has been a great concern among the People of God, and eſpecially among the Embaſſadors of Chriſt, to have a proper and ſuitable Perſon ſent among you. And we may ſuppoſe, God himſelf has been concerned in this matter, and that a Council has been held in Heaven upon it, ſaying, *Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go for us?* Such have been the diſcouragements in the way, that it has been difficult to find a ſuitable Perſon to engage in this Service. But the God of the ſpirits of all Fleſh, that God who has the Hearts of all in his own Hands, and can turn them as the Rivers of Waters are turned, has found out a Man for you, uniting your Hearts in him, and inclining his Heart to undertake this difficult Service among you, anſwering with the Prophet, *Here am I, ſend me,* and who is at this time to be ſet over you in the Lord, to whom I would now in the firſt place apply my ſelf

And DEAR SIR,

I would aſſure you that it is with uncommon delight, and unfeigned thankfulneſs to God, that we ſee you ready to undertake this difficult and important Service, that God in his Providence is calling you unto. We rejoyce that God, whom we conclude, has from the beginning deſigned you to be his Meſſenger unto his People, has been in the courſe of his Providence fitting and preparing you for it, by not only the Religious, but the liberal Education that he has afforded you.

And

And now we hope and truſt that he has in ſome meaſure prepared you for his Service, as he did the holy Prophet, for that which he called him unto. We truſt that you have had ſuch a ſpiritual ſight of the King, the Lord of Hoſts, as to fill you with humility and ſelf-abaſement, and that God has now touched you with a Coal from the Altar, that he has touched your Heart with his Grace and Spirit: that it is from a Heart full of Love to God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and with the higheſt Concern for the advancing his Kingdom and Intereſt, and out of a ſincere Love, and tender Compaſſion to the Souls of Men, and to this People in particular, that you are now ſurrendering up your ſelf, into the Service of Jeſus Chriſt among them.

The work of the miniſtry has its difficulties in every place, but it will be attended with peculiar difficulties in this place; and it will require uncommon degrees of Knowledge, of Wiſdom and of Grace to manage it aright. I don't ſay this to diſcourage you from your undertaking, but only to quicken you unto frequent and earneſt ſuits to God in Faith and Prayer, who is able to ſupply all your needs, according to his riches in Glory by Chriſt Jeſus. Don't be diſcouraged from the Troubles, the Trials, and the Temptations you may have the proſpect of, but encourage your ſelf in the Lord your God, remembering that Chriſt who ſends you, is ready to afford his Preſence and his Grace that ſhall be ſufficient for you, and therefore if at any time your Heart be overwhelmed with trouble,

let

let it only lead you to the Rock that is higher than you.

The Advice of our Saviour to his Diſciples when he ſent them forth, *Matth.* 10. 16. *Be ye wiſe as Serpents, and harmleſs as Doves,* is peculiarly proper for you: A wiſe and a prudent Conduct, and a harmleſs Life and Converſation, will be abſolutely neceſſary for the ſucceſsful Adminiſtration of the Affairs of Chriſt's Kingdom in this place. Be frequently then applying your ſelf to the Father of lights, and the God of all Grace, that he in whoſe Name you go forth, would counſil, direct, and aſſiſt you at all times.

You muſt teach and aſſert with all boldneſs, the Doctrines and the Duties of the Goſpel, and muſt endeavour to convince Gainſayers; but fooliſh and unlearned Queſtions you muſt avoid, knowing that they gender ſtrife. And even your aſſerting and maintaining the Truths of the Goſpel to thoſe that oppoſe it, muſt be in a calm and peaceable way, not ſhewing Anger or Paſſion; for *the Servant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive,* but be gentle to all Men, be apt to teach, and patient under all Oppoſitions he meets with, in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And O endeavour to recommend your Doctrines by your Example, exhibit to them in your Life an Example of Faith, and Patience, of Humility, of Holineſs and heavenly-mindedneſs, that ſuch as will not at firſt hearken to your Preaching, may be won by your good Converſation in Chriſt.

And

And now be ſtrong in the Grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus, and endure hardneſs as a good Soldier, patiently bearing all the Fatigues and Difficulties, and the Reproaches that you may meet with. And remember to imitate your Maſter, who when he was reviled, reviled not again. Don't be diſcouraged, if you ſhould not meet with great Succeſs at firſt: † in the Morning ſow thy Seed, and in the Evening withhold not thine Hand, for thou knoweſt not which ſhall proſper, whether this or that. The Diſciples had toiled all Night and got nothing, but in the Morning they caught a great number *. If your beginning be but ſmall, the latter end may be greatly increaſed. But if after all you ſhould fail of the deſired Succeſs, yet if you are faithful and continue ſo, your Labour will not be in vain as to you, for if *Iſrael* ſhould not be gathered, yet you will be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord: Your Judgment will be with the Lord, and your Reward with your God.

I ſhall have done, when I have addreſſed my ſelf very briefly to the Flock and Congregation that uſually aſſembles in this Place.

And now *dearly beloved in our Lord Jeſus*, we heartily rejoyce with you, that the Prayers and the charitable and pious Contributions of God's People, and the faithful Endeavours of his Miniſters have been ſo far bleſſed, as to make way for your gathering into a Church-ſtate, and to have the Goſpel and the bleſſed Ordinances ſettled among you.

† Eccl. 11. 6. * Luk. 5. 5.

And

And now as to ſuch of you as are about to give up your ſelves firſt to God, and then to one another in a ſolemn Covenant; O ſee that you do it with all humility, with all ſeriouſneſs and ſincerity, remembring that you have to do with a holy and a jealous God, that ſearches all Hearts, who cannot be deceived, and won't be mocked. And now ſee to it, that with all Love and Thankfulneſs you receive him that is coming to you in the Name of the Lord. The Voice of the Lord has been, *Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go for us?* For many Years none have been willing to undertake, but now at length, God has raiſed up one, who anſwers with the Prophet, *Here am I, ſend me.* Now therefore receive him as one ſent of God unto you, as a Meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts, receive him as a precious Gift of our aſcended Saviour, and as one that comes in his Name, veſted with Power and Authority from him, and pay him the Love, the Reſpect, and Obedience that is due to an Embaſſader of Jeſus Chriſt. Give your diligent Attendance upon his ſacred Miniſtrations, receive his Counſils and Inſtructions that are agreeable to the Word of God, as the Voice of God unto you: and take heed how you hear: and ſee that you attend with Reverence and Devotion on the divine Ordinances: take heed that you don't grieve him by an unſuitable and diſorderly walk, or by offering any Contempt to God's Houſe, his Day, his Miniſters, his Word, and his Ordinances. See that you eſteem him very highly in Love for his work's ſake, do what you can for his com-

comfortable ſupport among you, and if he ſows unto you ſpiritual things, don't think it hard if he reaps of your carnal things.

Furthermore, make it your daily practice to pray for him, and ſtrive together in your Prayers to God for him, that he may be an able Miniſter of the New-Teſtament, and that he may come to you in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt.

In a word, take heed that you receive not the Grace of God in vain, for now Chriſt is come unto you by his Miniſter, you will have no Cloak for your Sin, and how will you eſcape if you neglect ſo great Salvation! But we hope better things of you, even things that accompany Salvation. In a word, we ſhall not ceaſe to pray for you, that God would bleſs you with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus; that you may be increaſed with all the increaſings of God: and that there may be daily Additions made unto you, of ſuch as ſhall be ſaved. And we do accordingly with Faith and Fervency *commend you to God, and to the word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.*

FINIS.

6 AP 53